

# **Are We to Slaughter Our Cattle here in Buddhist Sri Lanka and Search for Meat Markets Elsewhere?**

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It is reliably learnt that the Government of Sri Lanka, through arrangements with the B.O.I., is planning to give a massive contract to the private sector to set up a large scale slaughter-house here and export the meat produced therein to the world outside. This is both shocking and scandalous. Only total anarchy in the land can give birth to such a horrendous crime while the human community everywhere, east and west, is seen attempting to regain its feet to sanity and sobriety in all areas of religio-cultural thinking. Whither our political and cultural leadership in Sri Lanka?

Several years ago, a report not very different to this, reached us that the Colombo Municipal Council was planning a similar project. We contacted the then Mayor and during an interview with him, he enlightened us on this matter and indicated to us as to who had fathered this idea years earlier. Then the whole plan was discreetly sent underground for a while. Today, its monstrously ugly head is seen raising itself again in the darkness of the political camouflage of the land.

Out of a global sense of human decency, and the need for mankind to continue living on this planet without being wiped out of it, the whole civilized world of science and philosophy [certainly not of trade and commerce], is now awakening to the idea that a sense of respect for all life of all grades, of man and animal, should be the true basis of human culture, nay even of survival of man everywhere. This has to be so, irrespective of religious differences, from

whatever source or from wherever they come. The Christian world today denies the existence of a religious sanction to slaughter animals and utilize their flesh and other byproducts like skins and furs for the use, basic or luxurious, of humans. They publicly disclaim the idea that animals are a secondary creation of God for exploitation by man which they decry as something unethical.

This indeed is a dignified and noble idea now seeing the light of day. It befits humans anywhere in the world, and is now coming to be respectfully accepted globally by the saner communities. The original of this was given to the world two and a half millennia ago by great religions of India like Jainism and Buddhism. Some western thinkers and writers like Victoria Moran of America who have been inspired by teachings of both these religions, have convincingly written about the worth of these more or less eternal and universal values, quoting from both religions. Realize what you have missed if you have not had the chance to read her *Compassion, the Ultimate Ethic*.

Peter Singer, a distinguished Professor of Bio-ethics from Melbourne and subsequently at Princeton in U.S.A. writes profusely on this subject of respect for animal life. In his large collection of books on the subject are eloquent ones like *Save Animals*, *Animal Liberation* and *Great Ape Project*. Frances M. Leppe's *Diet For A Small Planet*, Jeremy Riffkin's *Beyond Beef/Breakdown Of The Cattle Culture* need special mention for the benefit of those in blissful ignorance of the subject.

Sri Lanka is admittedly a multi-ethnic multi-religious country. Nobody is in doubt about the collective religious wisdom or the cultural worth of Sri Lankans. More than a hundred years ago, westerners who wrote about us have left for you glowing tributes about Sri Lanka and her people. Read books like Roloff Benny's *ISLAND CEYLON*. There are dozens more of them. We sympathize with you if these books haven't reached you.

We now have to think in terms of global realities, embracing within it the

entire ecosystem. Dominance of any one over any other, in terms of political fecundity, land, sea and air power, or even peaks of achievement in scientific and technological wisdom, has to be sealed up in the interest of survival of man on earth, even leaving heavenly achievements for a later date.

Let not a few money-makers, within or outside the government, tarnish globally the image of Sri Lanka. It is time for you now to say STOP. We can only warn you, because we belong to an older generation.